



UPCOMING SHOW PREVIEW / NEW YORK, NY
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George Billis Gallery
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CHRISTOPHER STOTT

Vintage minimalism



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Industrial objects such as vintage telephones, cameras, recorders and alarm clocks get a romantic touch in Christopher Stott's paintings, as the artist bathes his subjects in natural light that softens their starkness with diffused soft shadows. His paintings evoke a sense of nostalgia for artful design and tools of the past, with clean white backgrounds that allow the objects to shine, prompting viewers to create their own anecdotes about the objects' pasts.

"To me, Stott's work is about storytelling—stories untold, stories waiting to be told, stories that want to be told," says collector Alice Kuipers, who owns two of the artist's works. "As a writer, I'm drawn to the possibilities in the white space of his art. The realism of his technique contrasts with the playful, yet narrative, elements in these pieces. His paintings make me want to write, and they make me dream."

Stott, who has been painting in this style for the past 15 years and says he admires artist Wayne Thiebaud, finds his subjects in



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1
Yashicas, Kodak & Bencini,
oil on canvas, 12 x 24"

2
Christopher Stott in his
studio. Self-portrait by
the artist.

3
*Western Electric Co.
Rotary Phone*, oil on
canvas, 30 x 24"

4
Dream Days, oil on
canvas, 14 x 18"

5
Kodascope Model B,
oil on canvas, 30 x 30"



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antique shops and online, and sometimes borrows them from dealers. He has more than 50 books, typewriters, clocks and other objects in his home, which provide him endless inspiration for his reverent, orderly works that exude a sense of calm.

"I like the vintage time period because the objects are designed so well," says Stott, based in British Columbia, Canada. "They're really iconic and symbolic of the things they represent—like film projectors are iconic of



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movies. All the things we focus on now, we've been focusing on for a long time."

Each piece has myriad intricacies to discover, from the elegantly designed midcentury check imprinting machine in oil on canvas *Check Please*, to the antique projector with steampunk qualities in oil on canvas *Kodascope Model B*. The cameras in oil on canvas *Yashicas, Kodak & Bencini* are 1950s devices from Japan, the U.S., and Italy, and Stott delves into the operation

of his objects to gain a better sense of the world history they emanate.

Some of the details in Stott's pieces aren't as obvious. The telephone in oil on canvas *Western Electric Co. Rotary Phone* sits atop a book called *It's Storytime*, a subtle touch Stott says reflects the tales phone users might tell those on the other end. He positions a vintage alarm clock on top of books in *Dream Days*, as well. A book sharing the work's title is visible to the viewer, providing another clever connection.

Stott says he hopes, in addition to enjoying the composition and really detailed realism in his work, viewers think about the objects he paints and what they mean—that they're not arbitrary and just thrown down. He has certainly achieved that with George Billis Gallery, which has represented Stott since 2012 and presents an exhibition of more than a dozen new works by the artist in New York City through November.

"Christopher Stott's vintage object portraits, while simple at first glance, are anything but," says George Billis Gallery Los Angeles director Tressa Williams. "These books and fans and cameras become personalities. Painted larger than life, Stott's canvases with their slightly muted tones, subtle shadows and soft lighting are a testament to his technical skill as a painter, as well as his deep appreciation for these relics of time gone by. And yet, there is a modern edge to these—the clean lines and soft monochromatic background belie nostalgia and speak to a contemporary aesthetic." ●



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